

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for obtaining a natural mixture of conjugated equine estrogens depleted in non-conjugated lipophilic compounds selected from the group comprising non-conjugated flavonoids, non-conjugated isoflavonoids and non-conjugated norisoprenoids , said method comprising:

- a) subjecting an aqueous initial phase, selected from the group consisting of
 - (i) an aqueous solution of a natural mixture of conjugated estrogens from pregnant mares' urine already depleted in phenolic urine contents comprising phenol, cresol and dihydro-3,4-bis[(3-hydroxyphenyl)methyl]-2(3H)-furanone and obtained by solid-phase or liquid-liquid extraction ;
 - (ii) an aqueous concentrate of a natural mixture of conjugated estrogens from pregnant mares' urine already depleted in phenolic urine contents comprising phenol, cresol and dihydro-3,4-bis[(3-hydroxyphenyl)methyl]-2(3H)-furanone and obtained by solid-phase or liquid-liquid extraction ;
 - (iii) a concentrate of a urine liquid, and
 - (iv) a urine concentrate, freed from mucilaginous substances and solids by mechanical separation methods, or a concentrated urine retentate obtained by filtration optionally pre-purified by filtration ,

to a liquid-liquid extraction with a sufficient quantity of an organic solvent extracting agent which is suitable for extracting non-conjugated lipophilic compounds and is at most only slightly miscible with water, and subsequently separating a resulting aqueous phase , whereby the organic solvent extracting agent is selected from the group consisting of straight-chained, branched or cyclic C₄-C₁₀ alcohols, C₂-C₁₀ esterified acids, C₃-C₁₀ aldehydes, C₄-C₁₀ ketones, C₂-C₁₀ ethers, C₃-C₆ nitriles and C₁-C₃ haloalkanes and mixtures of the aforementioned solvents ;

- b) optionally repeating method step (a) with the resulting aqueous phase, and
- c) recovering an aqueous phase containing the natural mixture of conjugated estrogens depleted in non-conjugated lipophilic compounds selected from the group comprising non-conjugated flavonoids, non-conjugated isoflavonoids and non-conjugated norisoprenoids .

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, further comprising concentrating the recovered aqueous phase containing the natural mixture of conjugated estrogens.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein said extracting agent is immiscible with water.

6. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 1, wherein the aqueous initial phase in method step a) comprises (i) an aqueous solution of a natural mixture of conjugated estrogens from pregnant mares' urine already depleted in phenolic urine contents, or (ii) an aqueous concentrate of a natural mixture of conjugated estrogens from pregnant mares' urine already depleted in phenolic urine contents.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim [[7]] 1, wherein the extracting agent is selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₄-alkyl acetates, hexanol, diethyl ether, methylene chloride, methyl tert.-butyl ether and mixtures of two or more of the aforementioned solvents.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein the extracting agent comprises a C₁-C₄-alkyl acetate.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the extracting agent is ethyl acetate.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein in method step (a) the aqueous initial phase is adjusted to a pH value in the range from 4 to 12.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 11, wherein the pH value in step (a) is in the range from 4.0 to 7.0.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 12, wherein the pH value in step (a) is in the range from 4.0 to 6.0.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 13, wherein the pH value in step (a) is in the range from 4.7 to 5.3.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein in method step (a) the volume ratio of the aqueous initial phase to the extracting agent lies in the range from 5:1 to 1:3.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15, wherein the volume ratio of the aqueous initial phase to the extracting agent lies in the range from 2:1 to 1:2.

17. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein in method step (b) the volume ratio of the aqueous initial phase obtained from step (a) to the extracting agent lies in the range from 20:1 to 1:1.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 17, wherein in step (b) the volume ratio of the aqueous initial phase obtained from step (a) to the extracting agent lies in the range from 10:1 to 2:1.

19. (New) A method according to claim 6, wherein the depletion in phenolic urine contents is obtained by solid-phase extraction on a non-ionic semipolar adsorption resin or on a hydrophobized silica gel.